

Producer Guide

The Art of Pitching

Pitching

Pitching

A Handbook for Independent Producers

**2013 Revised
and Updated**



Published by the SABC Ltd as a service to the broadcast sector

Pitch

the act of presenting a proposal to a broadcaster – either in person or in the form of a document

The word “pitch” became common practice in the early days of cinema when studios needed an expression of the passion that was not always evident in written words. “You write the words, but you pitch the feelings.”

"If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" - African proverb

“A tree is known by its fruit” - Zulu proverb

In this series

Content is Queen

The Art of Pitching (2005)

The Art of Co-production

The Art of Sourcing Content

National and International Annual Observances

Thought Memory

The Art of Pitching

Revised Edition 2013

By
Howard Thomas

Commissioned by
SABC Innovation and Editorial



Conceptualised and initiated by Yvonne Kgame

Howard Thomas has worked in the entertainment industry all his life, and in television since it first arrived in South Africa in 1976. He is an award-winning TV producer, and has worked in theatre, radio, films, magazines and digital media. He has been writing about the industry for over 20 years. He is also a respected trainer, lecturer and facilitator, columnist and SAQA accredited as an assessor and moderator.

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Foreword

As we move into the Digital Television Age, the parallel lines of broadcaster and content provider, converge.

It's no longer a simple matter of proposal, contract and delivery. It's now all about partnerships, collaboration and shared responsibilities.

Where there were a handful of channels, there are now dozens. Where we broadcast to a mass audience, we now target niche audiences. As the face of broadcasting changes, and the body and spirit behind the face must change accordingly.

Since we first brought out the highly successful Art of Pitching in 2005, the economics of public broadcasting has altered. The audience landscape is different, and South African have progressed on their journey to a mature democracy—even the people have changed.

This new edition combines the new environment with what we know will happen. It also offers pointers to what might happen.

While the very nature of public broadcasting remains dedicated to public service, the way the SABC works and will work, has moved with the times.

There are challenges, but this time “challenge” is not a polite word for “problem”. These are real challenges: challenges that excite with a sense of adventure and wonder. The type of challenges you find in a video game—except that these are real-life, crossing borders, and involving teams of teams.

In the words of the old African proverb:

**“For tomorrow belongs to the people who
prepare for it today”**



Yvonne Kgame
Executive Manager: Innovation and Editorial
TV Division. SABC

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Preface

How many television programmes have you been involved in? How many never got off the ground?

Plenty of productions go into development and then fizzle out. Even more move into production and immediately go over budget. And in some cases programmes are broadcast, but don't draw audiences.

Yet many productions go ahead without a hitch, and prove to be an overwhelming success. How does this happen?

This booklet shows how to turn practical experience into success. It shows how much the digital multi-channel, multi (many) -media environment shapes new ways of thinking.

Everyone makes mistakes, but you can minimise risk by building on the experiences of others.

Veterans in television tell us that quality comes with experience – the more you do, the better you get. This book is about systems, order and methods. It draws on the experiences of successful producers all over South Africa.

It is about the simple principles of everyday business that can help television producers win bids and make excellent programmes.

How to use this book

Many people find the whole process of conceptualisation through to contracting, very complicated and daunting. It isn't if you see it in context and in sequence.

That is how this book is arranged. It starts with pitching in the context of the media in general and broadcasting as a specific.

Each chapter is divided into easy steps. The chapters are arranged in sequence, so that you can regard it as a systematic journey—and understand it as a straight road to success.

Know the media landscape

Myths

The television environment is full of myths and misunderstandings.

For example, people think that broadcasters decide what audiences want. But entertainment does not work this way. **Audiences** decide what they want and they switch on those programmes that most appeal to them.

Broadcasting is very complex, because audiences are very complex. Audiences consist of people, and people are very complex. All over the world, public broadcasting is the most complex of all media businesses. We will look at these complexities, what makes audiences tick, and what drives a public broadcaster.

In South Africa, there is the mistaken belief that all television programmes are commissioned. Commissioning occurs when a broadcaster such as the SABC puts out a Request for Proposals (a commissioning brief). This describes what type of programme the broadcaster is looking for, the target audience, the proposed day of the week and time of broadcast, and the price it is prepared to pay. In return for paying all costs, the SABC is entitled to the full rights and ownership.

But commissioning editors are also responding to what audiences need and want to watch on television. In these changing times, the SABC can only meet its mandate if it is flexible in the way it acquires content.

Broadcasters still commission, but most of the time they license, enter into a co-production, semi-commission whereby the producer retains some rights, or any of many different combinations.

Digital multi-channel TV has altered the way broadcasters do business. There are no longer fixed conditions and formats for acquisition. Everyone is flexible. This suits both the broadcaster and the producer. Both parties can negotiate contracts that are win-win. Good programmes (programmes that audiences like) depend on producers generating good ideas, and on their talent, production skill and business know-how.

Digital and social media have also added to the a new, exciting and adventurous time.

The changing landscape

Broadcasting has changed in South Africa and worldwide. Most countries in the world will be using digital terrestrial transmission by 2015. Instead of the electromagnetic spectrum capable only of carrying up to seven channels, it

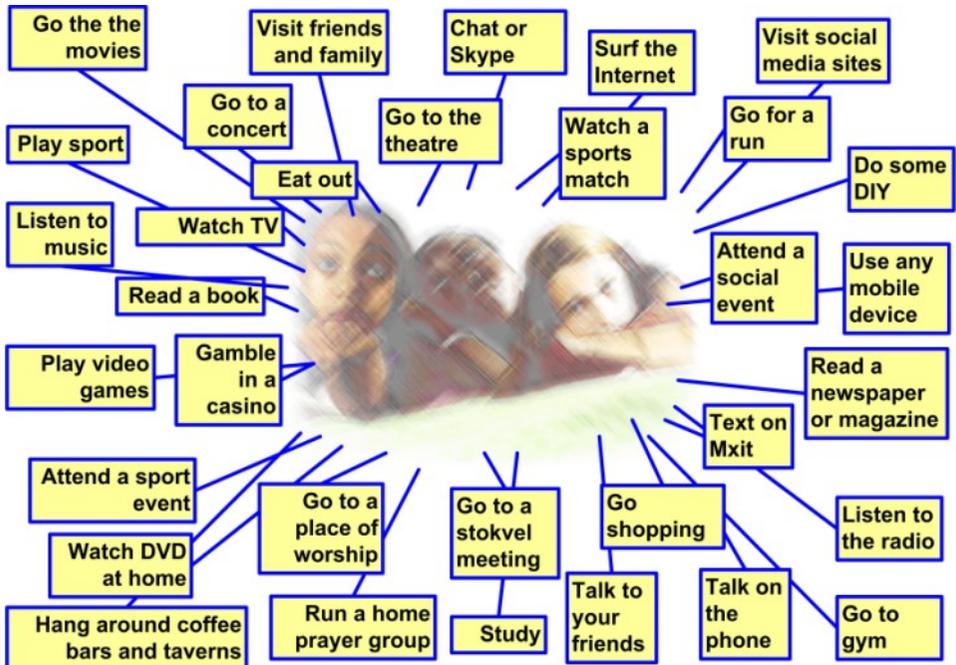
will have the capacity to carry 50 channels or more.

Already South Africans (who can afford satellite pay-TV) have access to over 100 channels. Digital TV offers viewers, who cannot afford subscription TV, access to dozens of channels free. It will also offer them high definition, wide screen and many other benefits not available on analogue.

More channels will demand much more programming. But at a lower cost, because the same audience, and the same advertising revenue, will have to be shared over more channels. However, modern technology reduces the cost of the production, so it can only mean more opportunities. More aspirant and newly trained producers can enter the market. However, producers will still have to *pitch* their proposals.

Niche tastes

More channels means segmenting audiences, and a greater demand for niche programmes—those that focus on narrower interests and appeal. Because there are more channels available, broadcasters can schedule programmes according to the tastes and interests of smaller audiences. These niche audiences often attract new and unique advertising, and other innovative revenue streams.



New trends

Together with digital television comes a maturing array of platforms of digital media: the Internet, interactive websites, social networking, digital marketing, crowd-sourcing, mobile media, search engines, WebPR, online reputation management, mobile engagement, games—just some of the many established media, with more on their way every day.

Technology

Five years ago, cellular telephones were a luxury. Today almost everyone in South Africa has one or more cellphones. The majority of these phones have Internet access. No one knows what technologies lie ahead, even a year in advance. Broadcasters and producers have to be open to change, quick on their feet and adventurous. You can't sit around anymore waiting to see how trends pan out—you have to act now, even if it means taking risks.

Cost of production

Smaller television cameras and integrated production systems make it possible for anyone to own the equipment they need to make programmes.

Broadcasters all over the world need more content to fill their growing number of channels. Multi-channel digital TV can accommodate a wider range of languages and cultural groups. As more producers make more programmes, the economies of scale come into play, and the cost of content comes down.

Income streams

Most of the public broadcasters in the world depend on advertising and television licence fees for their income. Accordingly, the SABC is constantly looking for new ways to attract income. Producers have to be innovative, and offer broadcasters innovative ways to bring in revenue. There is untapped potential in digital media, mobile interactivity, and digital experiences.

Local content

Audiences demand more local content all over the world. At the same time, the potential for our local content to reach foreign markets has increased. Producers and the SABC have unlimited opportunities to reach out to wider audiences in Africa and beyond and create additional income streams.

Producers are no longer just people who make the programmes. They need to have a wider outlook, and have to rely on greater knowledge of the global environment. Now is the time for independent producers to shine, and come

up with new, fresh, local ideas that draw audiences back to television and challenge the sometimes old-fashioned views of marketers and advertisers.

Co-productions

There are increasing opportunities for co-productions between African broadcasters, and partnerships between producers, broadcasters and global distributors.

Foreign sales

Programmes can be sold to broadcasters in other countries, but sometimes the appeal of programmes is inhibited by differences in culture and this affects the wide sale of programmes. Globally the trend is to produce different versions for domestic consumption and for foreign sales. It is costly to convert a programme made only for local markets, into one acceptable on the global markets.

Archives

Repurposing and reversioning are just two of the many trends that grew out of the need for cheaper or more cost-effective content. Old programmes that lie on the shelf contain valuable material that can be re-used. Reviving old picture material can save on production costs. Old programmes can be reversioned into different languages. “Warehousing”, or letting usable programmes rot on the shelves, has come to an end.

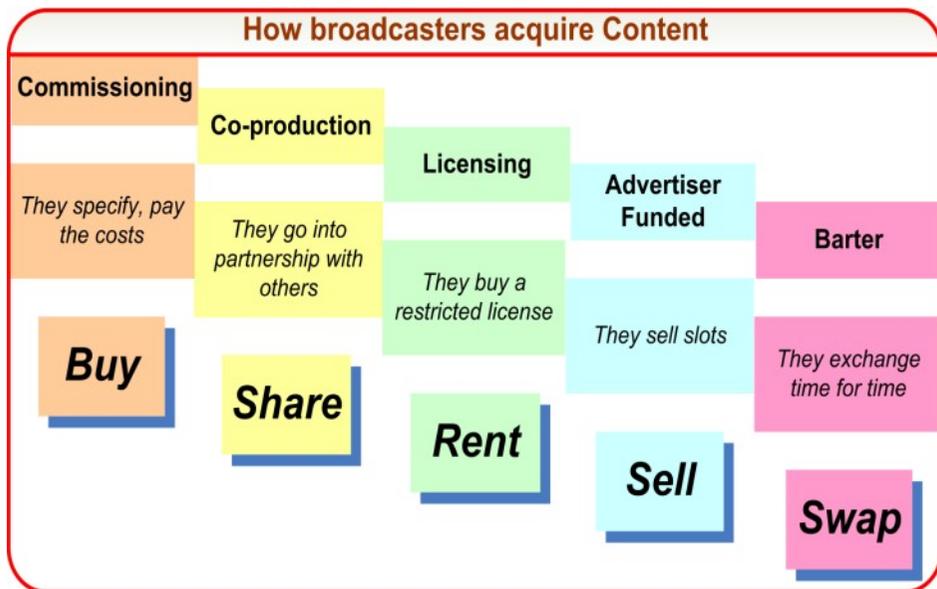
Digital media has created platforms for even more uses for old, outdated, and even recent content.

Know SABC Content Acquisition

The SABC has changed the way it acquires content in line with international best practice. Those people who are responsible for acquiring content at the SABC, have been put into one department or “Hub”. They are genre heads, commissioning editors and a special projects department.

The Content Hub works with the content providers (such as independent producers) and makes sure that each channel gets the content it wants via the people best equipped to handle that acquisition.

Acquisition happens in many ways – commissioning, co-production, licensing, advertiser funded, barter—and many other ways



Essential reading

Terms and conditions of commissioning and programme supply on the SABC website (www.sabc.co.za).

Know yourself

When you produce a programme, you express yourself. There are many types of programmes, many different audiences to connect with emotionally, and many ways (genres) of doing this.

We all have different and unique personalities, gifts and talents. It is important to determine which type of programmes you personally make the best.

It largely depends on your personal skills. It is hard to make a music programme if you are not a musician; a sports programme if you are adept at many sports, and so on.

You will make better programmes if you team up with people who can bring additional talents to the production team. You have to get to know your own abilities and those of your team.

Everyone has a different role to play.

- ◇ Some people can see pictures in their mind (visualise) and turn them into reality.
- ◇ Some people hear sounds in their minds and can translate them into music.
- ◇ Some people are good at business organisation. They have what it takes to become managers, production accountants and line producers.
- ◇ Some people can visualise what a concept will look like to the audience when it is made.

Producers know what they do best, and can put together the talents of various people to make up a good team.

Do the following exercise to determine the talents your team has and roles your team members will play. List the people in the left hand column, and tick off which talents they have. Try to make sure that across your team each of the categories is ticked at least once, so that the team is not missing essential skills it needs. If any of the categories are blank you may need to find one or two more people who have those skills and abilities.

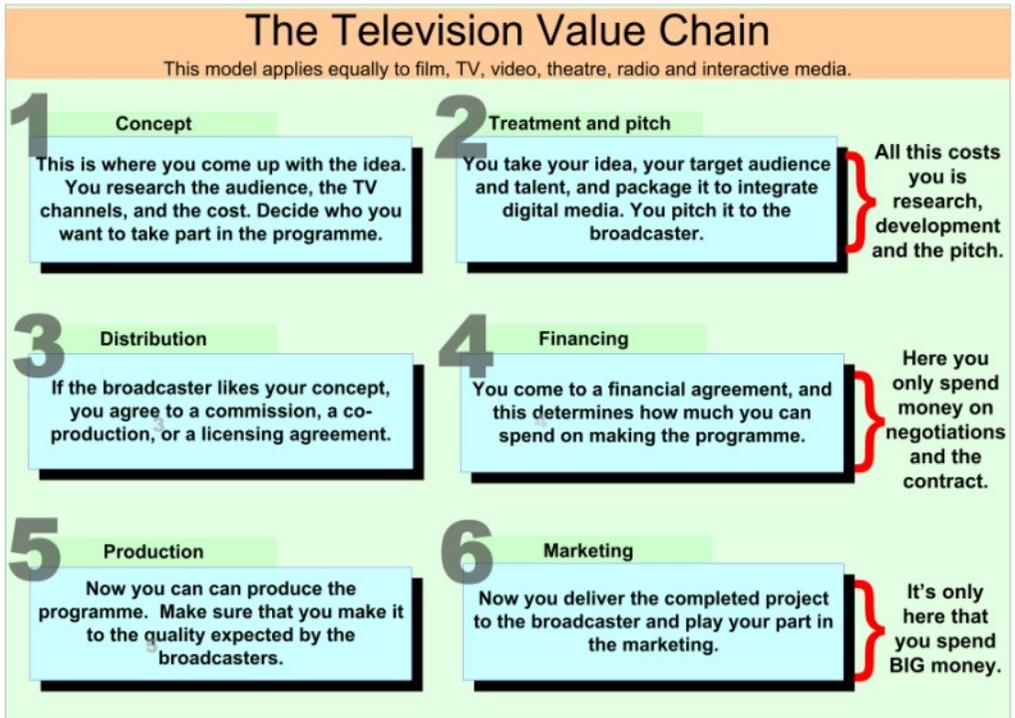
Names of the people in the team	Knowing the audience	Coming up with concepts	Research	Writing	Planning	Organising	Working with money	Budgeting	Managing money	Designing	Camera	Lighting	Sound	Editing	Attention to detail	Analysing emotions	Negotiating business deals	Technology	Marketing	Languages fluency	Cultural identifications	Other skills	
1																							
2																							
3																							
4																							
5																							
6																							

1 Getting ideas

Adding value

In television production, you must get used to the process of adding value. This is at the core of every manufacturing process, and television programmes are similar to manufactured goods designed for sale and consumption.

Television production follows a value chain, where every step adds value to the previous step. Look at the following diagram:



Every concept starts off as a simple idea and this diagram shows that initially a concept or idea on its own has little value. At first the idea or concept is little more than a proposal and agreement on paper. Once it has been worked on (in the treatment stage) and committed to broadcast (the distribution stage), then it has added value.

Only once the finance is in place, can you consider moving into actual

production. Here more value is added. Once the production has been made, its value lies in the audiences it draws. After your programme has been broadcast, more value can be added by repurposing and reversioning the content.

Discover a concept

How many times have you sat around trying to come up with an idea, only to switch on the TV and find that someone else appears to have used your concept?

That's because you had an idea, but you did nothing with it. If you sit and wait for a commissioning brief, you will be left behind. You have to take the initiative and generate ideas on your own.

Here is a 10-point plan on how to generate and discover stunning ideas that could make you a lot of money.

1 Watch lots of TV

You need to know what audiences like. Read newspapers and magazines to find out what topics they cover. This can help you anticipate the tastes of the public. Also read trade magazines, international news and follow the ratings of television programmes. You can get TV ratings from the South African Audience Research Foundation's website at www.saarf.co.za.

Familiarise yourself with the subject matter and issues that people like to explore, and also those they don't like.

2 Get ideas from other media

1. Read the television programme schedules and go back a year or two. You may have to visit the public library to read back-copies of TV guides. Read newspapers and magazines. Find out what stories people like reading, and what interesting things ordinary people are doing around the world.
2. Read history books, as well as books on contemporary culture. Find out what happened in the past and what matters to people today, based on past changes.
3. Search the Internet for useful information and ideas. Do an Internet search on: 'television "South Africa"' and bookmark all the popular sites. Visit them weekly. Read the TV blogs and bookmark the .mobi sites.

4. Listen to the radio. Many more people listen to the radio than watch TV, and radio is often a better reflection of peoples' concerns and aspirations than television.
5. Get in touch with people you do not normally mix with. Extend your circle of acquaintances, and develop a broad perspective of the people who watch television. Don't ask them what they want to see. Rather let them talk about themselves and their lives, and find out what concerns them, what they want to know about, what are their insecurities and aspirations.
6. Watch as much television as you can. Through satellite programming it is now possible to see the best the world has to offer. Study the programmes that are shown to global markets. Find out what styles of programming global and local audiences enjoy. Spot their tricks and techniques.

3 Get in touch with channel branding

Every television channel has a brand. They have their loglines (pay-off lines) and branding statements. These give you an idea of what the channel stands for, what it is saying, and, most important, to whom.

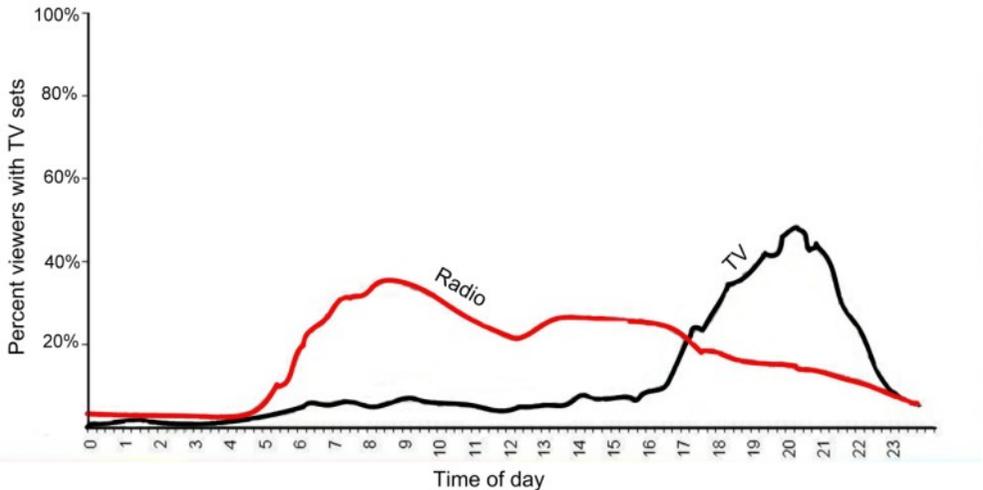
Go to the stations' websites and read about their branding. Get in touch with how the channel sees itself, what it wants to be, and, most of all, which audiences it wants to attract.

4 Get to know audience movements

Do you know that people watch television in a pattern? You can't change this. People only watch when they can get to a TV set. It's different with radio. Radio receivers are small enough to carry around. Of course, TV viewing is changing as people use more handheld and other devices.

In South Africa there are just over 35-million people of all ages who are tracked as viewers. Find out how many people there are in the TV audience that you are targeting. Find out how the ratings system works, and what is meant by the terms AR, Living Standards Measurement (LSM), channel share, etc. South Africa has its own way of working, and you can find it at the SAARF website. LSM is explained later.

QUICK GUIDE: AR is a percentage of the total viewers with TV sets.
Share is the percentage of people actually viewing.
Cume is the number of individual (unduplicated) viewers in a given period



(Source: AMPS)

This graph shows how many people watch television and listen to the radio over any 24-hour period during the week.

The peak on the left of the graph shows radio consumption which is at its highest in the morning (between 7 am and 8 am). The peak on the right shows TV consumption which is at its highest in the evening (around 8 pm). The scale on the left hand side of the graph shows the percentage of available listeners and viewers.

The graph shows that more people listen to the radio in the morning and watch TV in the evenings than at other times of the day. Notice also, that at 9 pm at night, no more than 50% of people watch TV, shared over all the television channels.

So when a programme like Generations gets 20% of the audience at prime time, it means that:

1. 20% of the viewers who have TV were watching.
2. Since only about 40% of people with TV had their TV switched on, then half the audience who were watching, were tuned to Generations.
3. The share of the audience actually watching was 50%

Share is a percentage of the people who have their TV sets switched on at a particular time.

By the way, a 20 AR (50% share) is spectacular in any country that has a multi-channel environment.

5 Generate ideas on your own

When are you at your most creative? Some people sit quietly to dream up ideas; others go for a run, or go for a walk in the country. Do what it takes to get your mind and your imagination working. Don't just think of a programme concept – actually imagine you are watching your idea on TV.

See it in your mind. Imagine there are people watching it, and ask yourself, “Are they enjoying it, and if so, why?”

6 Organise a think tank

If you make television programmes, then you have to work with people you trust. So gather your colleagues and partners and start a think tank. Two heads are better than one, and five are even better still!

Follow the three rules of brainstorming. They are simple.

1. Generate ideas without judgment. Let people throw out as many ideas as possible. In this step, no one is allowed to criticise an idea, even if the ideas are crazy. Just let the ideas pour out, and delegate one person to write them all down. Don't go on for longer than half an hour. After that, the brainstorm tends to run out of steam.
2. Classify the ideas. Rewrite all the ideas into genres or types of programmes. You should have a list that includes drama, comedy, variety, magazine, documentary and so on. This will take another half an hour.
3. Now go through them all, and discuss them in detail. This is the first time the group is allowed to judge and criticise an idea. Make a short list of “Good Ideas”, “Mediocre Ideas” and “Bad Ideas”. Keep a record of all the ideas. Even the bad ones are worth visiting again.

7 Make a final list

List all the programme ideas you have collected from your own research, think tanks and brainstorming sessions. Don't start sorting your ideas at this stage. The more ideas you have, the more ammunition you have.

8 Look for a gap in the schedules

Go through the television schedules for all the channels again. Look for issues and genres that are not being covered, or being covered poorly, and see if there is a gap between what people want, and what they are getting. Don't worry about whether there is potential for making money. Just look for the gap.

9 Check that there is a market in the gap

You will find lots of gaps in the media menu that people have access to.

But are there enough people in that gap to be a viable market for your programme? For instance, you may see that there are no programmes for people who like to keep pet snakes. But then there may be only a handful of people who keep snakes. Rather, extend your idea to cover all pets. Or you may find there are no programmes for lovers of progressive jazz; but are there enough people to create a market for a programme on this subject? Programmes that have a limited market often land up as specialist television and radio programmes that are broadcast late on a Sunday evening.

10 Define the audiences for your final list of ideas

Now make up a short list of your best ideas, and start looking at the audiences that are available for these ideas. Are there a lot of people who would like to watch these programmes? How do you know? What research do you have to do to find out how many people would watch your programmes?

Find a magazine that caters for this group of people and look at the magazine's circulation figures, which you can get from each magazine. Visit the specialist websites that attract this audience. You can use tracking software to find out how many people visit the site.

For instance, there are at least six entertainment magazines that cater for the youth market. Choose the one that seems to approach your idea, find out its circulation, and work out whether the size of the market would make your programme viable. You can check their circulation in the SAARF data, and read the contents.

If you cannot find a potential market of half a million people for your programme, scrap the idea. Cross the programme off the list.

2 Opportunities for pitching

Proposals can be pitched in response to published briefs, or even unsolicited proposals. The SABC believes that the independent production community is a goldmine of untapped potential. It does not rely only on its own resources for innovation and imagination.

Responding to briefs

The briefs follow a specific format, and set out the needs of the channel for which the commissioning editor issues the brief.

The SABC can issue briefs at any time. This flexibility allows the SABC to respond quickly to audience needs. Commissioning briefs are advertised and publicised widely. They are available from the SABC offices (Cr Artillery and Henley Roads, Auckland Park, Johannesburg 2092) and posted to the SABC website (www.sabc.co.za).

Unsolicited proposals

An unsolicited proposal is one that is presented to the broadcaster at the initiative of someone outside the SABC – a producer, an organisation, etc. In other words, unsolicited proposals do not depend on Requests for Proposals.

The SABC will consider unsolicited proposals that “convincingly demonstrate competitive advantage for the Corporation, and if a sound business case can be made for pursuing them”. (SABC Content Policy)

Check the format and content of proposals that are posted to the SABC website. It will tell you how many copies of your proposal you have to make, what format you should use, and to whom it should be addressed.

Your unsolicited proposal will take a slightly different approach to a proposal that responds to a commissioning brief. For example, you may be proposing a co-production or a licensing agreement.

3 Defining a slot, channel and audience

If you are making an unsolicited proposal, take the concept or the programme you have discovered, start looking for the best slot on the most suitable channel, and start defining the audience for the programme.

1 Refine your concept according to audience age, gender and race

Go back to your concept, and decide on the best audience for it, in terms of age, gender, race and language. In South Africa, we divide audiences into the following age groups: 7-12; 13-14; 15-24; 25-34; 35-49 and 50+. There are two genders: male and female.

Although race is still a dimension of South African life, broadcasters and the advertisers prefer to define an audience in terms of their stage of life, lifestyle and attitude.

Language is an important issue in broadcasting because it increases the accessibility of programmes to different audiences. It is important to remember that to the vast majority of South Africans, English is their second language. If the subtitles are in a viewer's second language then viewers will tend to need more time to read them.

It is a law of television that people do not really enjoy programmes that are not in a language they easily understand.

There are differences in tastes between the language groups, but differences in taste between the genders do not seem to be as great. Some programmes do cater specifically for male or for female tastes, but it has been shown that in most cases the other gender (the one not targeted) also watches the programme, even if only out of curiosity, or because people generally enjoy sharing experiences.

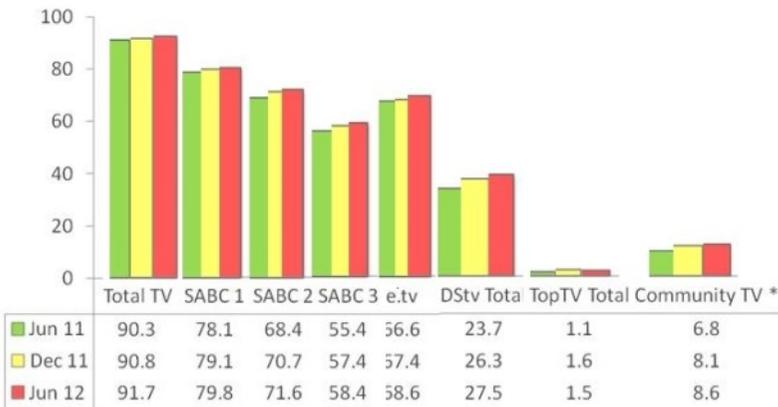
The big differences lie between the age groups. The South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF) can supply you with information on consumer tastes for the different age groups. It tells you what types of products the different age groups buy. Visit their website at www.saarf.co.za.

To find out what each age group wants to watch on TV, you will have to look into consumer and entertainment psychology. This involves psychographics, semiotics, the dynamics of culture and the psychology of consumer behaviour.

2 Study audience movements on the channels

Each channel has its own target audience, and each audience has its own characteristics. While all viewers collectively have a pattern of behaviour, this is only an average. In reality, people in different age groups do things differently. Younger people are at home in the afternoons; older people tend to stay home on Friday and Saturday nights whereas younger people go out on these evenings over the weekend.

TV Channels Viewed Past 7 Days



* Note : This includes terrestrial and satellite viewing

Source: AMPS

SABC 1 has a largely young, black target audience, whereas SABC 3 has an older audience and SABC 2 has a varied and diverse audience. You can get information on channel audiences from the channels themselves. It is in the interests of the channel to make this information available, as it may help producers come up with a concept for a hit programme for their channel.

Digital channels will have completely different branding, target audiences and ways of scheduling.

3 Define your concept in terms of language group and LSM

Now go back to your concept, and decide which language your programme should be in. Statistics South Africa has the language breakdowns from the last census on its website (www.statssa.co.za). Languages are closely related to culture, and you will find many interesting and relevant books free on the Human Sciences Research Council website www.hsrc.ac.za. Next, look at the living standards of your target audience.

This is not as important as the age group that your concept appeals to, but your business partners and the commissioning editor will want to know this information, because it affects the type of advertising that the programme will attract. Obviously, programmes targeted at wealthier markets attract advertising for costlier products. However, it is not that simple.

Different income groups spend money on different products. For example, people in the lower income groups spend more on batteries than those in higher income groups. That's because they have less access to electricity.

In most western countries, people are divided according to how much they earn (income groups A, B, C, etc.). In South Africa, we divide people into groups according to what they spend money on.

	AMPS Jun 11 (% population)	AMPS Dec 11 (% population)
LSM 1	2.1	1.9
LSM 2	5.7	5.1
LSM 3	6.5	6.1
LSM 4	13.1	12.2
LSM 5	16.9	17.4
LSM 6	21.0	22.4
LSM 7	11.0	11.5
LSM 8	8.2	8.4
LSM 9	9.1	8.9
LSM 10	6.4	6.2

We call our groupings Living Standards Measurements (LSM). We have very good reasons for doing this: our society is skewed by historical imbalances. It is possible that this may change in time in line with international trends, but for the moment, the present system suits the marketers who buy the advertising time.

The LSM groupings roughly follow income, but not necessarily so. There are now 10 LSMs. The following table gives you the approximate monthly household income for each group and the percentage of the population included in that group.

LSM Monthly Income in Rands % population

These figures change every year. Keep up to date with the latest data from South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF).

By now, you should have a good idea of your target audience. Don't make the mistake of thinking that TV programmes have to appeal to rich people in order to make good advertising revenue.

Sometimes you will want to appeal to the most people, and at other times you will want to appeal to all the people in a small group. Your business plan (discussed in section 9), will tell you if you are on the right track towards a profitable project.

4 Study the past performance of similar concepts

Go back through television schedules and look for programmes in a similar genre to your programme, with a similar format, a similar emotional appeal and programmes that used the same or similar performers. This is always a useful indication of how audiences will take to your concept.

This information is also helpful when negotiating with the SABC and the project partners. The partners gain a sense of security when they can see past experience, and find a precedent for your proposed idea.

In your research, find the following data:

1. The audience that the programme attracted, especially the age and LSM demographics.
2. How long the programme ran for.
3. Whether the audience increased during the run of the programme, the rate at which it grew, and the point at which the audience growth levelled off.
4. The type of advertisements that the programme attracted. How many ads were sold in each episode, did the advertising revenue grow during the run, and what type of advertisements did the programme attract? The cost of advertisement slots are given in the SABC Rate Card which is available on the Internet. You can take a good guess at the advertising revenue by multiplying the number of ads by 60% of the rate card cost. The remaining 40% takes into account the cost of sales and an estimate of the discounts offered by the broadcaster.

You can buy all this data from one of the ratings agencies. (See "sources on page 64

5 Look for performers that your audience will like

Make a list of the performers who appear on TV often.

Are any of them suitable for your programme?

The chances are they may not be suitable because it is very difficult simply to 'migrate' performers, and there is always the danger of "using them to death".

There are good reasons to look for new talent.

1. It's cheaper. Big names come at a high price.
2. They are more available. You want to go into production when you are ready, not when the performers are ready.
3. You can own the programme from the start and make money out of them once you have helped them establish their names.

There are also disadvantages to using unknown performers.

1. Audiences feel secure with names they can trust. Remember that people are giving up their valuable time to watch your programme, and you have to persuade them to risk their time to watch performers they don't know.
2. You don't know if unknown performers will be able to perform as you want, or if they will be able to sustain the performance.
3. If they make it into the big time, you don't know how they will handle fame and fortune. You may have more trouble on your hands than it is worth. We try and tie up such matters in contracts

6 Study the past record of the channel you have selected.

In a multi-channel environment, the audience can afford to choose a channel. There are always at least two channels with a suitable profile that you can approach with your concept.

Look carefully at the growth of the channel over the past year. Have there been changes in management? If the channel is on a growth curve, it will be looking for new programming that meets the rising expectations of its audience? If it is on a downward path, the manager will be desperate for new and fresh material. Remember: if your concept and business plan are good, you always have a choice. If, however, you are a newcomer, then you have the upper hand, as you do not have a track record.

7 Look for the ideal slot

When does your target audience watch television? This is easy to find out.

You know the target audience, and any of the ratings agencies can search for the exact profile of your audience and tell you how many of them are

watching and when, and on what days. Never choose a slot that already has a long-running programme taking the majority share in that slot.

However, if your concept is strong enough, a competitor channel may be attracted to your concept in order to steal that audience away. Broadcasters are like predators. It is easier to steal an audience than to create a new audience. In other words, it is easier to get people who are already at home and watching TV to change channels, than to get people to go home and switch on the TV.

Also, if you are fighting a strong programme on another channel, it is going to cost a lot more in marketing to get people to change what they are used to. People are conservative. They stay where they are comfortable.

Having said that, people can also be fickle. If something else offers them marginally more satisfaction, they will change. So don't count on channel loyalty.

8 Study the past performance of that slot

Any of the ratings agencies will give you a history of a particular slot, with the audience profile and the growth of the audience. Go back at least six months. However, also look at a history of all the other channels at the same time and on the same days, and see how the channels have drawn the audience away from each other over the past six months.

Study the programmes and watch how people have moved from one programme to another, from channel to channel. This will give you a good idea of the type of programming that has grabbed their attention. This information is available from the channel.

A word about "attention". Today, audiences have many choices about how to spend their leisure time. They can watch TV, or they can listen to the radio. They can go down the road to the tavern, or they can read a book.

They can read a newspaper or a magazine. They can chat on their cell phone, surf the Internet, or spend quality time with their families and friends.

The different types of media are not fighting for loyalty, but rather for attention. Free-to-air television is faced with people who can change channels with a flick of the remote.

Every month there are more apps people can get absorbed in on their phones.

You want audiences to watch your programme, and to keep watching during the commercial breaks. The broadcaster offers advertisers commercial

breaks during programmes. In order not to lose your audience during these breaks, your programme must be strong enough to hold the audience and make them wary of changing channels in case they miss something.

You are fighting for audience attention.

9 Estimate your potential audience

Go back to the six-month tracking that you did in the previous step. If you take the average between the highest audience and the lowest audience over the past six months, you will get a realistic idea of your starting audience with minimum marketing.

“Scheduling” is a highly specialised subject. It deals with the techniques you can use to estimate what audiences will do, based on their track record.

You also want an audience breakdown within your target audience. You will make better programmes if you learn from the SABC how to best understand your audience. Content Hub commissioning editors know their business and their audiences. They also know audience movements across the channels over the past year or so. If you are going to negotiate with the SABC on an equal footing and as a potential business partner, then you must understand the audience as well as the SABC does.

If you are not ready for the complexity of partnering or co-production, rather go for a commissioning relationship, which is simpler.

10 Look for fall-back slots and estimate their audience potential

Your main strategy before you go into a negotiation is to go for the slot you really want. But if the broadcaster has plans you did not know about, you may have to accept a slot that is second-best. This is known as the “fallback position”.

So, after you have found the slot you really want, you should also choose at least two other slots that you have in mind as the “first fall-back position” and the “second fall-back position”.

If you are planning a daily programme, then your fall-back positions should be the slots on either side of your first choice, or the same time slot on another channel.

4 Responding to a commissioning brief

Are you responding to a commissioning brief issued by the SABC Content? If so, it is important to spend some time on how to read that brief.

You should never just read a brief. Read it again, and then “read *through* it”. Before you even think of whether or not you have the right concepts for the brief, study it carefully.

Have another look at the schedules for SABC 1, 2, 3 and the digital channels. Look at how they arrange schedules. Go to the SABC website and check the channel branding again.

Make sure you know enough to be able to understand exactly why the brief was issued. The SABC spends a lot of time, experience, and knowledge in writing and issuing briefs. There are also demands on the SABC in terms of the public mandate. There are commercial requirements to earn income to subsidise the mandate. The SABC is part of the competitive environment and must attract audiences against the competitive channels.

Here are 10 things to look out for in the brief:

1 For which channel is the programme intended?

Go to the SABC website and check the branding of the channel. Have it clear in your own mind what style, demographics and cultural viewpoints the channel focuses on for its audience.

Memorise the channel’s logline (pay-off line). It tells you a lot about the look and feel of the channel.

Now go and check out the other SABC channels, and also the branding of all competitor channels that people can receive. If you are thinking about making a programme for the upper income groups, then satellite pay-TV is definitely a competitor.

2 What does the working title tell me?

What can I read into the title of the brief? Does it convey any clues or atmosphere? Working titles can contain a lot of information, so study it carefully.

3 What does the duration tell me?

The duration tells you a lot about the audience, and how the schedulers of the channel see the attention span of the audience at that time. Remember that schedulers broadcast 60-minute programmes only when they are sure that the audience has a spare hour to spend in front of the TV.

Never forget that people watch TV out of choice. They choose TV from among an enormous amount of competitive media, and choose to watch TV from among many other private activities they could be doing.

4 What does the place in the schedule tell me?

Does the brief specify a specific broadcast time or is it vague, saying something like “early evening”? Or is there no time mentioned? This may be deliberate. Every word and the way it is written in a commissioning brief is deliberate.

5 Guide pricing?

If the price is high, how does this compare with the position on the schedule?

If the programme is at prime time when advertising is costly, then the broadcaster is probably expecting the programme to attract advertising. If it is scheduled for “off peak” broadcast, then maybe the price is low as it is part of the public broadcasting mandate and is cross-subsidised.

6 Language?

What language is specified? What is the size and demographics of this language group? Can you speak the language? Look carefully at whether your team has the capacity to produce and deliver programming in the specified language(s). If you're not sure, go back to the section “Know yourself” and find a way of bringing these skills into your team.

7 Commissioning editor?

What sort of work has this commissioning editor handled before? Can past performance give you a guide to the type of programmes that appeal to this person? Remember, that commissioning editors don't commission what they personally like; rather, commissioning editors are assigned to programmes and genres that they are good at handling.

8 Closing date?

Can you get the proposal ready well before the closing time, so that you have plenty of time to check it? Will you be able to assemble and commit a team by then?

9 Current affairs?

What's going on in the environment, in the world and in South Africa that may have motivated this programme? How can you link into current developments to give your proposal an added "hook"?

10 Other clues?

What is the regulator, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) up to at the moment? How is this commissioning brief related to regulatory changes?

The digital television and other digital media environment is fluid. It is new to broadcasting, and all broadcasters will be finding their feet for many years still. Channels, business models and interactive digital media will change frequently.

What about changes in audience tastes, in the world of fashion, youth culture, and other current matters?

These are also fluid, and influenced to a large degree (in the short term) by fads in technology, mobile devices and interactive media.

When you have read the brief, make a list on a separate piece of paper of all the requirements both stated and implied in the brief. Keep this list with you whenever you are discussing the concept with other team members, or people with whom you will need to associate. This will help you to stay on course, and focused on what the SABC needs.

5 Knowing what makes audiences tick

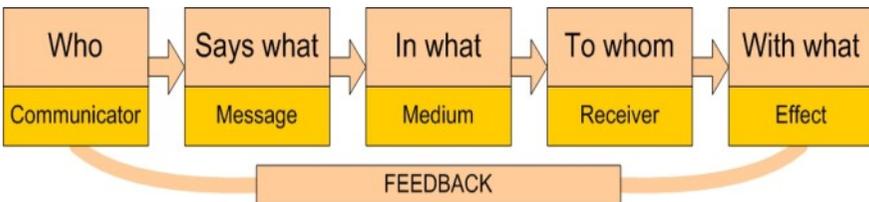
The audience is very complex and a professional producer should be an expert on the subject. The subject is not only about psychology or sociology. It's a mixture of many, many disciplines and involves culture, communications and economics, marketing, consumer behaviour and audience psychology.

Here's a simple overview of what you will find in the many books on the subject.

1 Basic communication

There is not much about basic communications theory that is essential to production, but it is important to remember the model.

What is important to know is that there is no communication without a sender, a message, a receiver and feedback. This is a mistake many producers make. They are so excited about their concept that they forget they need an audience. They also forget they need to find out how the audience received their programme.



2 The uses of television

There is so much television, that many programmes are no more than a throw-away commodity.

They are merely useful for getting information, or finding out the opinions of your favoured personalities. Lifestyle programmes and celebrity shows are merely trivia, and seldom meaningful. If you want your programme to be remembered it has to be meaningful.

That does not mean to say that trivia does not make money. You must be sure what a programme is going to do for the audience, and how much money you want it to return. There are no hard and fast rules.

3 How does television satisfy peoples' needs?

We buy consumer products to satisfy needs. These needs are simple and are explained in the diagram below: Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Our basic needs are physiological (the need for food and water).

Safety needs (shelter, clothing and security) are also basic needs. Television cannot provide for our basic needs.

However, television does satisfy the other needs in the hierarchy. Social needs are the need to talk to others, to communicate with, be with and share with others. Esteem needs are the need to look good both in one's own eyes and in the eyes of others.

Self-actualisation needs are the need to advance, to fulfil one's aspirations, and make one's dreams come true. Television plays a large part in meeting social, esteem and self-actualisation needs. Remember, people cannot meet their needs higher up in the triangle until the ones lower down have been satisfied.



4 How do people use entertainment to develop survival strategies?

The only thing that is certain in life is that there will be change. Very few people welcome or look forward to change. Most people believe that it is better to live with what you know and don't like, rather than change to what you don't know, even if it may be better. There is security in the familiar.

Because people fear change, they like to build up stores of information that will tell them how to deal with the unknown should it happen to them. That's why people listen to stories. Stories are accounts of how real people have dealt with life's challenges.

They are true-life examples on how to deal with things that could happen to you. By listening to stories, people learn strategies to survive change. This is why listening to and telling stories have been the most popular pastime and one of the best ways of learning since the beginning of time.

5 What is entertainment?

Entertainment is much more than offering diversion, relaxation or taking someone's mind off their problems. Entertainment helps people understand themselves. Entertainment is storytelling so that the audience learns

something. A soccer match tells a story. A quiz show tells a story. A song tells a story. Individual people get out of each story what is meaningful to them. The more universal the story, the more it will appeal to many people.

6 Touching emotions with entertainment

Entertainment works by telling a story that touches the emotions of people.

Psychologist Carroll Izard says there are six emotions:

1. Joy/Happiness
2. Fear/Anxiety
3. Anger
4. Sadness/Grief
5. Disgust
6. Surprise

7 What is culture?

Culture is the way people say and do things within their communities. It is probably the most important thing that makes a television programme successful. Before we can enjoy the content in a story, we need something with which we can identify. That's what culture is. It's "where our hearts and minds are coming from".

Culture dictates whether you will find a story offensive or not, whether it will mean something to you or not. We are brought up in a certain culture and that culture will remain with us forever. It is very difficult to shake off. But we are also curious about other cultures.

Television must be directed to the culture of the intended audience, in their language(s), but also in line with their values. Their values are related to religion, geography, traditions, heritage, mythology—and many, many complex factors. The free eBooks available from the Human Sciences Research Council website will help. There are also many clues in the SABC Attitude groups, which you will find at the SABC and SAARF websites.

8 An audience's values

Every culture has its own values. Individuals within that culture have attitudes. Values are extremely difficult to change and differences in values account for much of the conflict that exists between people. Attitudes are easier to change.

Stories are about resolving conflict. Sport is conflict, quiz shows are conflict, and drama is made up of conflict. The stronger the emotions involved, the

longer the memory lasts. If a programme is to be successful, audiences must remember it.

9 Experience

Experience is important from three points of view.

1. Audiences are guided by their previous experiences. If they know and like the performers, then they will tune in. If they liked your last documentary, they will watch the next one.
2. People also want to experience things from different points of view. They want to be part of something exciting, something new. They want to “experience” something that will teach them something about themselves.
3. They want to take part. The more they have to invest in a programme emotionally, intellectually and physically, the more they will enjoy it. Just look at what sports fans know about a sport; they make a huge effort to know all about the rules and the details of the players. Think about the effort they expend watching a game. They shout and scream until they are exhausted. That’s what you want them to do with your television programme. And now with interactive technology, audiences can take part in some television programmes by sending in their comments while the programme is on air.

10 Creating memories

“We are scientists engaged in the creation of memories” is the way one film director describes the role television programme-makers.

There are two reasons why you want people to remember your television programme. Firstly, you want them to tell their friends about it so that they watch the next one, and secondly, you want them to watch it again.

There are many ways of getting an audience to remember, apart from making it so emotionally compelling that they have a wonderful experience and get totally wrapped up in it.

We do this with marketing, which gets audiences so excited, that they change their personal schedules just to watch the programme. They make an appointment with the programme.

We also use different media to market each other (‘cross-media marketing’) to excite audiences about the programme. We offer them radio, press, magazine and Internet experiences that tie in with the programme. And we give them an opportunity to enjoy spending money on the merchandising.

If the programme is about hiking through the Kalahari Desert, you could offer them hiking trips that they can do for themselves. If it’s a children’s

programme, we could sell the toys made from the characters.

Do whatever you can to reinforce the long-lasting nature of the memories that the programme has created.

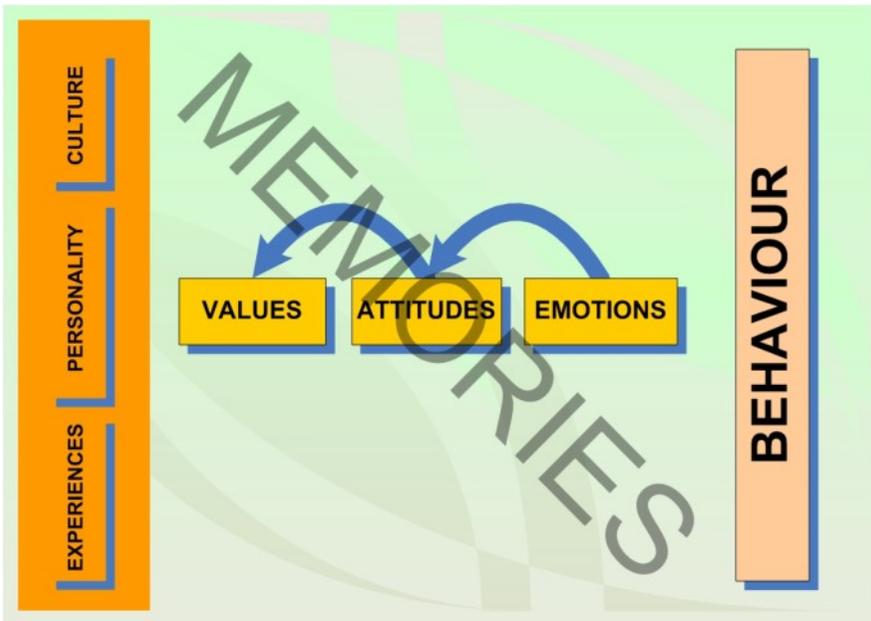
11 How it all fits together

What is contained in the last nine steps does not exist on its own. It's all part of a bigger picture. Take a look at the diagram below.

We want people to act – to DO something. We call this “Behaviour”. We want them to switch on the TV and watch our programme, and watch it with such attention that they keep watching right through the commercial breaks. We also want them to take part in all the other activities we have designed for them.

We start off with the culture, personality and experiences of the target audience. Then we work through their values and culture and their attitudes, and we communicate with them through their emotions. In the process, we create memories.

The end objective is their behaviour: they should enjoy, experience, tell their friends and watch every other programme that has our name attached to it.



6 Cost the programme and define the income streams

The television producer has many faces. He or she is an accountant, a lawyer, a manager, a leader, a controller, a negotiator, and foremost – someone who knows audiences.

We now come to the accountancy part of producing. Of course, you are not expected to be a chartered accountant. You will probably employ the services of a chartered accountant to verify the work your bookkeeper does, and you will employ the services of an entertainment lawyer. But you still have to be able to budget, estimate and do cash flow projections.

In this section, you are going to learn how to work out whether a concept is financially viable. To do so, you have to find out what it will cost to make and to market. Then you have to work out all the money that the concept or project can possibly earn. Each source of money is called an “income stream”.

Follow these steps.

1 Roughly cost the programme

You can get standard budget forms from the SABC Content Hub. If you follow the headings and the items, you will probably not leave out anything.

Once you have estimated all the production costs (including pre-production and post-production), you will have a reasonable idea of the budget.

In South Africa, we measure the cost of programming as a cost per minute, so you will have to take the total cost and divide it by the total duration of the programme to arrive at a cost per minute.

Talk shows can cost as little as R250 a minute. Magazine programmes will be in the range of R1 000 to R2 000 a minute. Documentaries cost between R1 500 and R4 000 a minute. Soap operas and sitcoms come out at R4 500 to R6 000 a minute. Drama can cost R8 000 to R15 000 a minute. Low budget “kasi” films can cost as little as R2 000 a minute. By comparison, foreign programming averages around \$100 a minute.

WARNING: These figures drop over time as technology gets cheaper and more channels come on stream, so check them before you base business decisions on them.

Long runs cost less per final running time as the fixed costs are amortised over a longer number of episodes..

When it comes to calculating the cost of the programme, you need to

include the cost of marketing. This is difficult to estimate, as it is a complex process. For instance, the channel will buy time from itself for its own promotional spots (promos), and it will calculate the cost of this time at the same price as advertisements (this is known as the “Rate Card Cost”). If the promos are broadcast in prime time, the cost is high. The channel may also advertise on radio and in the press. Lots of prime time programmes are now being advertised on billboards (known as “Outdoor” advertising). There may also be competitions involved which will be part of the marketing budget.

Since you don’t know what marketing will cost until you write the marketing plan, the best you can do at this stage is to make a provision for the marketing. You will find the steps to write a marketing plan in Section 13.

Put aside 20% of the production costs for marketing. This will give you a rough guide. So your final calculation will look like this:

Production costs		R a
Provision for marketing	$R a \times 0.2$	R b
Estimated costs		R a+b

2 Estimate the advertising revenue

To estimate the advertising revenue, you need to be guided by the track record for the slot you want, based on the Rate Card for that slot.

Try to estimate how many advertisers will buy up the allotted advertising time (8 minutes per hour, or 4 minutes per half-hour). A good guess is that you will sell half the advertising slots. So take the number of slots (2 per minute) and multiply that by the Rate Card. You can get Rate Cards directly from the SABC TV Sales. You can compare rate cards of other broadcasters by downloading them from their websites.

Remember that the SABC offers discounts to their major advertisers and also pays their sales personnel commissions. So, by the time these additional costs have been paid (called Cost of Sales), there is possibly only 60% of the Rate Card cost left for the channel.

To estimate the advertising revenue for a slot, use this very conservative “guesstimate”:

Half the number of available slots x 60% of the Rate Card.

3 Define the income streams

Apart from advertising revenue, what other money could the project earn? At this stage, additional income streams should be part of the original concept. What you are doing here is defining them. If you hadn't thought of them, and now you have to find them, then go back to "Discover a Concept" in Section 1.

Income streams should be a natural part of the concept, just as arms and legs are to the body.

Ask yourself some of these questions to guide you:

1. What digital media and interactivity could add to the overall experience, and by so doing, make the programme more attractive to advertisers?
2. Are there opportunities for competitions? Competitions give the audience a sense of participation, they are interactive and, with careful planning, they can generate extra money or reduce marketing costs.
3. How can I get the audience to phone in? If you have a cell phone number that they have to phone into, then you could do a deal with the cell phone service provider where at least a third of the cost of the phone call goes to the project. What else can you do with a phone app?
4. What could be sold as a consumer product? Can you sell the programme brand to a fast food chain? Can toys or dolls be made and sold? What about games? If the show is glamorous, can you come out with a label of designer clothing? Are there opportunities to sell travel, interior decor, food, cars, cosmetics, personal improvement, or even financial services?
5. Could the programme be made into a book, or allied to other books, or help to sell books that are already published? What about comics?
6. Could you do a deal with a magazine whereby the content is mirrored in the magazine and on television? Remember, potential partners will always ask: "What's in it for us?"
7. What about radio? Could you do a radio version of the programme to be broadcast on radio during radio peak-time? Is there a deal you can do with complementary programming?
8. What about shopping centres? Could you run promotions or moneymaking opportunities in shopping centres on the days before and after the broadcast of the television programme? What about using shopping centres to create new merchandising opportunities?

9. What about retail outlets other than shopping centres? Could you do a deal with petrol stations, garden centres, restaurants, or even housing developments?
10. What about marketing through the Internet? Think hard about this one. The Internet works well as a limited and relatively low-cost marketing tool. Few people in South Africa (or the world for that matter) have made serious money from the Internet. But, it's a useful tool since the Internet will soon be accessible to everyone.

4 Define the performers and their costs

Make a final decision on the performers you will use. Find out (by phoning the agents) what these performers will cost you. If you are going after big names, the cost of performers could be very high and you may need to make changes to the production budget.

At the same time, if you are using big names, ask yourself how these big names could work for the project and generate more income streams. What about a column in a magazine supposedly written by the star? What could it earn? Couldn't it attract advertising to the magazine, which you could get a slice of? How about personal appearances?

It doesn't matter what an income stream earns you. If it earns more than it costs, it makes a profit. Even if you are in for just 10% of that profit, 10% is 10 times better than 0%.

5 Check your marketing costs

You are now in a position to revisit the estimates of the marketing costs you did in the original budget. Is the project generating many income streams? If so, is it worth increasing the provision for marketing? Get expert business advice on this matter. Many producers use the services of business advisors on such matters. Always get advice from three independent sources (as well as your lawyer and accountant) before you make a decision.

6 Refine the budget

Go back to the budget and check it again. Have you left anything out? Do you need to add something to the production to make the income streams possible? There is no sense expecting an income stream to make money if you have not financed it properly. You have to spend money to make money.

This is a fundamental rule.

Check the budget against the provision for marketing and the list of income streams. Check that it makes sense as an overall picture.

7 Do a cost and income statement

Add up all the costs in one column, and add up all the income in another column. Make sure that the costs and income relate to the same period of time. It is better to take the total period, from the time that the deal is signed until the end of the project. All projects make and cost different amounts of money at different stages of their duration.

Once you have the totals, then subtract the costs from the income. If you have a positive figure, it is called PROFIT.

If there is a negative figure, it is called a LOSS. If you land up with a loss, go back to “Discover a Concept” and start the process over again, or choose another concept.

8 Look at foreign sales potential

Could this project sell abroad as it is? In this case a foreign broadcaster may buy the master tapes and perhaps even subtitle or dub them into a foreign language. But this is highly unlikely. Local programmes can rarely be translated for international cable and satellite stations. For instance, in a local documentary or travelogue it would be perfectly acceptable to say “The Afrikaans cultural festival in Oudtshoorn”. But this statement would mean nothing to people in Germany or Scotland. They probably don’t know what Afrikaans is, or what, who or where Oudtshoorn is.

You would have to rewrite and change the commentary for an international audience, in which case the commentary might say, “Every year, the people who speak Afrikaans, a language descended from Dutch, get together and celebrate their culture in the historical town of Oudtshoorn, home of the ostrich feathers.”

You may find that there is not enough picture material to carry the commentary. Then the picture has to be extended, which means a re-edit.

That is why you decide at a very early stage of the concept whether you are going to have to make provision for an international re-edit and an international track (IT).

What could the programme earn in foreign sales? Only an international distributor can tell you this. Top producers travel every year to MIP TV and MIPCOM in Cannes so that they can meet and network with the international distributors.

You can’t just phone an international distributor and ask her to estimate the global sales potential of your programme.

An exercise like this takes a lot of work. Distributors generally will only do this for producers they know personally and can trust to deliver good projects.

Once you know a distributor, and can network with her, then it's simply a matter of sending the project to her and she will send you a schedule of international sales estimates. It takes relationships to get there, and you have to invest time and effort in creating these relationships.

Look to Africa and other developing countries, instead of always the West.

9 Divide the cost and income between possible partners

Now you have to do another thumb-suck “guesstimate”. Look at the costs and the income streams. Who are all the possible partners?

Look for every possible cost-cutting opportunity.

Firstly, there are your costs. Then there's the contribution to the total costs provided by the SABC.

Now, who else is in an integral part of the action? What about a main sponsor? What about a branding and merchandising partner? What about a cell phone company or even a large retailing group? What about another media company?

Your project defines all the natural partners. If you have created a project that is integrated and well proportioned, then the project partners are natural parts of the whole project. Look at the categories of costs and the categories of income streams and assign them to possible partners. Make sure that, in each case, each partner's income exceeds the costs they are incurring.

Write these figures down on a piece of paper, hide it away and don't let anyone else see it. It is your secret weapon.

QUICK GUIDE:

Content for the global markets must accommodate vast differences in language, culture, and national sensitivities. Names and places familiar to South Africans must be explained. Never contemplate selling on foreign markets unless you have included all the variables into the concept, treatment, script, production, master and marketing.

7 Writing a treatment

It is well known in entertainment that a lot more work goes into writing a treatment than writing a script. Producers are NOT scriptwriters. They are treatment and business plan writers.

In this step, you will learn how to write a document that will get the SABC and all the potential business partners excited. Treatments and business plans draw in investors and partners. Scripts draw in audiences. Anything that upgrades a programme into an experience, excites audiences.

This treatment procedure has evolved from the common practices of successful producers. When you go through it, notice some important things:

1. It is systematic. The sequence flows. It is a checklist. It makes you do things that may appear to repeat actions, but actually they are making you check back on yourself.
2. It makes you research and develop the concept as you go along.
3. If you follow the steps carefully you will avoid the common mistake of putting together concepts that are not researched, not developed, not focused, and therefore not thought through.
4. It incorporates all cross-media elements.

Commissioning editors are attracted to proposals that make sense to the audience, make business sense, make sense to the channel, and fit nicely into the schedule and the mandate.

1 Write the story

Don't start to write the story until you can see each and every frame of it in your mind, with your eyes shut. You must be able to visualise it from "Fade up from Black" to "Fade to Black".

Write a description of what the viewers will see. If you don't know where to start, then open with the words, "The programme begins ..."

Write this out in full. If it's a drama, it could be 30 or 40 pages. If it's a talk show or magazine programme you will probably fill about 3 pages.

If it is a documentary, then write the story that the documentary will tell. If it's a drama, then write it out act by act. If it's a magazine programme, then state what the programme is trying to say as a whole and the type of subjects it will feature. If it's a game show, describe what happens.

2 Write the one-pager

What you have already written is part two of the treatment. Now write part one, which is a one-page cover page for the whole package. Rewrite the story in just one page, including a heading that gives the title, logline (see step four below), genre and target audience.

That leaves you with just 250 words to get your message across in. This is very important. Commissioning editors, marketing managers and investors get these things all the time. All they are usually prepared to do is read the first page. If that grabs them, then they will read the rest.

So the challenge is to pack every bit of excitement into the first page.

Many producers still make the fundamental mistake of trying to make this page a semi-legal document with conservative formality. Don't! Make it exciting! Grab the reader! Make the reader want to know more, right away! Force the reader to turn the page and read on with anticipation.

Furthermore, make sure that it is written in a way that describes why the audience will be excited. If you are very clever, you will add in an appetiser of what's in it for the broadcaster and the business partners.

It will take you some time to write the first draft of the one-pager.

3 Write the TV Guide entry

Now write the two-line entry that the press will use to describe the programme in the "TV Guide", published in the newspapers, the TV guide websites, and the digital TV Electronic Programme Guide (EPG).

Imagine it. There's the title of your programme. And underneath it in small print is a description of two lines long. That limits you to 20 words. This is going to take you a long time as well, but the statement must include the genre, the draw-card performer, and a reason why the audience should drop everything to watch the programme. Try not to be cheap and silly and use clichés like "Don't miss it". That's cheating.

4 Now write the logline and branding statement

Logline

In Hollywood, they have a concept called the "High Concept Line". Basically, it's the four or five words that go on a movie poster to draw in the crowds. From that, we have locally developed a technique that suits us. We use the word "logline". The poster seldom applies to marketing in television (we tend to use outdoor hoardings), and often the two-liner that you wrote in the last step is too long. So write a logline of just ten words.

Imagine you are writing the words that will go on an outdoor billboard that advertises your programme. In 5-6 words, describe not what the programme is about, but what it will do for the audience. In sales terminology, we call it a prime benefit statement. What's in it for the audience? Tell them why must they drop everything to watch the programme.

Branding statement

This may or may not be the same as the logline. Branding statements are the three or four words that you see under the name of a TV channel. Banks and other companies make good use of loglines that are also branding statements. What do these phrases say? They describe in words the personality of the product. It's like the difference between describing a beautiful woman as "The most devastatingly beautiful creature I have ever seen", and saying "Beauty's being".

Describe the soul, the spirit, and the essence of your programme. Describe the universal feeling the viewer feels after watching the programme.

It is very important that a programme's own brand (spirit and soul) fits in with that of the channel. With so many channels to choose from, channels need to distinguish themselves from each other. That is why the station logo appears through some programmes in the corner of the screen, and in the channel idents in the breaks.

Individual programmes have to fit in with the same branding or "spirit and soul".

5 Write the story treatment

You now have to go back, and re-write the story that you started with in the first step above. What you wrote then was just a guide.

Starting at the logline, then going to the TV Guide entry and finally to the One-pager, check that the story was written properly. You will probably have to write it all over again. So, write it again, and this time do it so that it follows naturally from the logline, the TV Guide entry and the one-pager.

6 Do a rights schedule

Are there any parts of the concept that you have bought, or intend to buy from anyone else? The work is only entirely yours if you created everything from nothing, which is a rare occurrence.

There are bound to be things that you have bought from some other source, even if it's only the background music you intend to lift off a mood music CD. When that music is recorded, the sound designer will fill in a copyright form (Music Cue Sheet) and apply for a license, the fees for which must be included in the budget.

Here are some of the things you may have to put in the rights schedule:

1. Mood and background music.
2. The rights ownership of any specially composed music.
3. Was the concept adapted from a book, play, film or other TV programme? What have you negotiated with the original owners?
4. Is it a true-life story? What have you negotiated with the person on whose experiences the programme is based, or with that person's descendants?
5. Will you be shooting the production on private property or using property belonging to anyone else? What have you negotiated for the use of the property?
6. Will you be using any graphic art that you have not commissioned yourself?
7. Will you be buying footage from a stock shot library, and archive photographs?
8. Will you be filming newspaper headlines?

Check all your digital rights: regard everything on the Internet as copyrighted material—don't take chances.

7 List similar programmes broadcast in the past

Go back to all your audience research and summarise similar programmes that you have managed to track down, describing how a similar target audience received them.

This section should be quite short. It is there to show that are serious about research. This data will have cost you some money and by doing this you show you are willing to “put your money where your mouth is”.

8 The total experience

Draw a diagram of the whole digital experience. You have to play a double game. You must design the TV programme so that people can enjoy it as a single viewing, without any other media involved. Many people don't have access to all digital media, and many others just don't want to. You also have to design it so that, combined with all the cross—media elements it becomes a full digital experience. This “Digital Experience” incorporates digital media, social networking, live media, print media, music, radio, podcasts and other mobile media.

This is what we mean by “MULTI (many) - media.”

9 Final checklist

Now go through this list and check it off against anything you may have forgotten:

10 Check it all fits together

Now pull it all into one neat package. Check that you have:

1. A title page that includes:
 - a. Working title
 - b. Genre
 - c. Duration
 - d. Proposal reference number
 - e. 250-word enticing and exciting summary.
 - f. Your personal contact details
2. A treatment.
3. A logline and branding statement.
4. A costs and income summary.
5. A rights schedule.
6. Track record of similar programmes.

Ask yourself: Does it read well? Does it look professional? Does it give the full story and the full picture?

Make sure you put your name and date on every page in the “footer”. This is enough to copyright your material in your name.

Your Checklist

		Yes	No
1	Do you have a summary of the budget, the income streams and the loss statement?		
2	If your project is a drama, have you done descriptions of the characters, and is the lead character strong and well-defined?		
3	Does the storyline and one-pager make it clear what you are trying to say? Is your intention clear?		
4	Will the project uplift or depress audiences?		
5	Is the content suitable for national television? Broadcasters tend to resist unhappy endings, excessive violence, distasteful characters, and themes that may offend the morals or religious beliefs of people.		
6	Have you cast the production realistically and affordably?		
7	Is the theme or story high-profile? If it's in the news, it's easy to sell.		
8	Is it an internal or external story? Broadcasters prefer programmes that have some action, rather than just the thoughts and feelings of people.		
9	Is the duration realistic? You will find it impossible to place a programme that runs for 65 minutes. Remember a TV hour is 52 minutes, a half hour is 26 minutes and a two-hour movie runs for 104 minutes.		
10	Have you understated the costs and overstated the income because you are passionate about your concept? If you have, the broadcaster and potential partners will spot it quickly and you will damage your credibility.		

8 Making the pitch

You are now ready to start planning for the big event – the pitch. The pitch will probably be the most horrifying and strenuous 10 minutes you will spend on the project. It will also take the shortest time. That's why you should invest at least a week planning it.

1 Set your objectives and standards

Make a schedule of things you want to achieve in the pitch. Here are some of them:

1. You want to demonstrate that this is original, fresh and directed to the emotional needs of the target audience.
2. You want to whet the appetite of the pitching panel regarding the money that is to be made, directly and indirectly.
3. You want to show that you are sincere, passionate, professional and have done your homework.
4. You want to make them discuss your concept further.

Don't expect to sell your project at the pitch, unless you are a miracle worker.

Set standards for the objectives. Go through the list of objectives and then set a standard for each one. This will be a schedule of how well you intend to achieve the objectives. Detail and state the standard in terms of quality, quantity, cost and time. For instance, if the objective of the project is to make an overall profit, then set standards and say: Make R500 000 before tax profit, on a budget of no more than R2-million and nine months from start of the project.

On the other hand, the programme may be sponsored, in which case you are aiming for the largest possible target audience.

2 Plan how to make the best use of the time

You will make your pitch to a person or panel. You will probably have only 10 minutes.

All that concerns the people on the pitching panel are:

1. They will see and hear you.
2. If they want to know more, they can read the proposal you leave behind.
3. If they want to know even more, they can arrange a further meeting.

Now, how are you going to divide it all up into three parts listed above, so that you don't put anything that you do not need into the 10 minutes of valuable presentation time? Write out everything you need to cover, and allocate it to one of the three parts of the process.

Now look at your strengths. You are going to perform in front of a person or a group of people, but you are a producer and not a performer. Perhaps you have some physical things about you that you feel are disadvantages.

Perhaps you think you stutter, or are not very attractive to look at.

Forget it.

You can't change any of "you". Commissioning editors do NOT expect you to be a performer. What matters is the passion you have for your concept.

1. Relax.
2. Focus on your passionate belief
3. Check that you have done your research and development
4. Check that everything makes sense, and that you are honest.

3 Write your presentation

Now go back to the map of the document you did previously. Write what you are going to say in 10 minutes. It's not very much – about two written pages (allow yourself no more than 50 words a minute).

Research the channel to which you are pitching, and, if possible, the people who will be on the panel.

After the first draft, stand up and read it out loud, time yourself, and practise it over and over again.

If you are creative, your pitch will be startling, imaginative and different. You won't use any gimmicks like PowerPoint or props—just your creative mind, your body language and your passion.

Now that you have written the script of your presentation, you are ready to make any adaptations to meet the needs of the SABC Content Hub and the channels. How you go about that depends on your access to information, and of course your network. First of all, research the business of the SABC and its channels. Then research the individuals who will listen to the pitch. What are they like? How do they react to people like you?

4 Rehearse

Rehearse the pitch carefully. When you are ready, ask someone to listen to you and watch you do it and offer qualified criticism. Also plan what image you want to project on the day. Make sure that your appearance is clean and neat.

Don't practice in front of a mirror. Find an honest friend—mirrors don't give nice feedback.

Do NOT talk too fast. No one ever listens to a machine gun! Talking fast is not a show of passion—it's a show of talking too fast.

5 Check the business climate

Make a final check of the latest local, national and international events, especially trade information, to make sure that you are not pitching something inappropriate.

In this day and age, anything can happen. You would have looked a little silly if you had pitched a terrorist drama involving high-rise buildings in the week after September 11, 2001!

6 Agree the date

The Content Hub will call you to a pitch meeting. They will give you plenty of notice. You can't just e-mail the information; they want to meet you.

7 Confirm it in writing

Fax and e-mail confirmation of the meeting in writing, and make sure that the time, date and venue are correct. Remember, it is not enough to be on time; it is far better to be 10 minutes early.

8 Relax

Relax, be yourself, present your feelings about the project. More TV programmes have been sold through passion than through anything else.

9 Assess your performance

How did you do? Your pitch is usually followed by a question and answer discussion. If you were "yourself", then relax, you probably did fine.

9 Writing a business plan

The business plan requires a lot of thinking and planning. But it does not require great skill and you should be able to do it yourself. Remember that it must be logical, sensible and a little exciting, without using “hard sell” language. It is not a legal document.

1 Write out the headings of the plan.

Here are some suggested headings

1. Introductory Contents		6. Sales and Marketing	
	Cover		Distribution
	Executive Summary		Marketing Strategy
	Table of Contents		Income Streams
2. Business Description			Advertising revenue
	Industry Overview		Sponsorship
	Company Description		Funding needed
	Company's Products or Services		Investment sought
	Positioning		Programme sales
3. The Project			Other revenue streams
	This Project - description		Advertising and
4. The Market		7. Management	
	Distributors and audiences		Management
	Market Size/Trends		Ownership
	Competition		Board of Directors/ Board of Advisors
	Estimated Sales		Support Services
5. Development and Production		8. Financial Documents	Risks
	Development Status of the Project		Cash Flow Statement
	Production Process		Balance Sheet
	Cost of Production and Development		Income Statement
	Operating Expenses		Funding Request and Return
	Capital Requirements	9. Appendices	

2 Fill in the gaps in a first draft

Go through the headings and make notes of the things you are going to include. Each project requires its own business plan, and your plan may need its own specific headings. The headings above are only a guide for you to work from. You may have to delete some headings, and add some of your own.

Facts and Figures. State where you get your facts and figures from. If you make estimates, you must state how and why you arrive at these estimates.

Style: A business plan is NOT an exercise in academic formality. Write it using simple language that is precise, accurate and honest.

Shorter, simpler and easier to read is BEST.

The keys to a successful plan are:

- ◇ Simple language
- ◇ Logical layout
- ◇ Include only information that is strictly necessary
- ◇ As short as possible
- ◇ Easy to read

3 Introductory contents

Leave this to the end. You will only be able to design the cover, write the Executive Summary and do the Table of Contents when everything else is finished.

4 The Project

Here you describe the project, what it consists of, and how all the elements fit together.

5 Business description

This is a description of your business, the people who make up the partnership, alliance, the company or the group of companies. In this section, you will also describe what you have done in the past that is proof of your competency and the competency of the group.

5 Market

Describe the entertainment environment, what the industry is going through, and what audiences are getting. On this basis you will then explain what the

opportunities are, and why this project fits in with market wants and needs. In short, state the gap in the market, and the market in the gap.

7 Development and production

Here you describe the development that has taken place, the conclusion and how you intend to produce all the elements involved.

This will be quite a long section as you also have to describe which partners are in place, and which ones still have to be signed up.

8 Sales and marketing

How are you going to sell and market your programme? It has to be sold to distributors and then marketed to audiences.

9 Management

Describe the people involved in the business, the empowerment aspects, your past experience of the people, and why the partnership/alliance makes sense.

10 Financials

Ask your accountant to help with these as the risk analysis and the cash flow analysis are complex and are probably the first thing that the reader of this business plan will look at.

11 Appendices

Here you put in any other relevant material, and in the case of a TV programme, the obvious Appendix 1 is your pitch document, which includes the treatment and the other summaries.

QUICK GUIDE:

As an independent producer you need a business plan for your entire business, planning two years ahead. You will need a special separate plan for each project that involves co-production partners and licensing.

10 Doing the deal

A commission is not a deal. Getting a commission is like taking an order. It does not entail negotiating investment and profit share. All it means is that you have sold an idea to the broadcaster and the broadcaster pays you for the manufacture. The broadcaster takes all the risk, all the copyright and takes on all the potential profit and loss.

Doing a deal, on the other hand, means pulling together a consortium of investors, financiers, co-production partners and distributors, and negotiating profit and copyright share.

Here is a simple step-by-step procedure to follow when doing a production deal.

1 Define all the income streams.

List all the income streams, their costs, their potential income, and then work out the potential gross profit from each. When calculating the costs, be realistic. When estimating the potential income in each stream, be conservative. If you are not, the potential partners will spot it. Also, you want to be realistic because the higher your estimates, the higher the risk.

2 Approach the potential partners

This is what takes the time. Now list all the people (potential partners) who may be interested in being involved. They may be the SABC, other African broadcasters, a foreign distributor, potential sponsors, advertisers and service providers. They could also include financiers such as the Industrial Development Corporation or one of the merchant banks who expresses an interest in television projects. They could be media companies, retailers, car manufacturers or telephone operators. Then you divide them up into categories and rank them in order of those you would like to have on board. Then approach the people on the top of the list and work your way down until you have found people who like your business plan. Choose people that you know would like to be in partnership with each other.

How do you know who they are? You need to read the business press and television trade press, and subscribe to industry newsletters. You should have a network of people who provide you with information. You should also buy the data you need from statistics bodies like the South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF). You should also network, and know your way around the larger companies.

3 Refine the individual deals

After you have approached potential partners and found those who are interested, you will always find that your original estimates and assumptions have had to change. Perhaps you had thought that a cell phone company would be interested in sponsoring the programme and instead you found a supermarket chain. You may also find that they are interested in investing in a different way and want a different return from what you had originally anticipated. So, you have to go back to the business plan and make changes to the way the deals are structured.

4 Refine the business plan

This may mean changes to the basic structure of your plan. You will probably have found that the people who are interested have even come up with different or more income streams, and changed the cost structures accordingly. It's not a matter of starting again, but just making changes.

You will be doing this often.

5 Approach investors

What if there is a capital shortfall? This happens when some of the people who want to be involved are prepared to put up "capital" in the form of deferred payments, as you will have done. Perhaps they want to invest services in place of cash. This means that instead of taking payment for your services at the beginning, you defer payment and convert it into "capital", which you will get back with profits later. This happens almost all the time. Willing investors are often short of cash. Where a service provider has offered low cost services in exchange for publicity, this is usually known as a "trade exchange".

However, this doesn't give you cash to pay bills at the start. That's why you need people who will come in with money, and invest it as financial equity. We call these investors and they could range from your family to a merchant bank. You may even be able to get development funding from many of the funding agencies. This process of the "mix" is very complex and you may need some professional advice.

Try not to take money from family and friends. If the project loses money, your family and friends will lose their money, and you will lose them. It's bad enough to get into trouble with a bank, but letting down your family and friends will lead to lifelong unpleasantness.

There are many ways to make up a capital shortfall. They are usually quite complicated. Seek professional advice.

6 Refine the deals again

Now that you have finance, and the money with which to start making the project, you will have to refine the individual deals again. This is because the interest payments on loans and the profit returns for the investors will put the entire business plan into a new light.

7 Refine the business plan again

Earlier, you were warned that this would happen often. Any change in a deal will change the business plan. A crucial part of the business plan is the cash flow analysis. This records how much cash you have in hand month by month. If you run out of cash to pay the bills, you will have to borrow money, and this is expensive. This extra cost will eat into your profits.

That's why investors and lenders always look at the cash flow analysis of the business plan first.

8 Confirm the plan with the partners

Now that you have revised the plan, send the revised plan to all the partners to make sure they agree with it. If they don't, you are in for more revisions, and so it will go on until you get it right and everybody is satisfied. Don't expect making a deal to take a day, or a month. It will never take less than six months, and sometimes it even takes years.

9 Construct the deal

You now have to get an entertainment lawyer to help you construct the deal. This means drawing up a contract for each partner, and making sure that each agreement is perfectly in line with the business plan, and perfectly in line with each of the other contracts. The business plan should be a summary of all the individual deals.

You don't have to let each of the partners see each other's contracts, but it is better to be transparent. If you keep information secret, then it seems you are trying to hide something from someone. Deals that are successful and that lead to more deals in the future, are open, honest and transparent.

Successful business is all about TRUST.

10 Get it all signed

Get the deals and the contracts signed.

QUICK GUIDE:

Never start production if you have a capital shortfall. If you don't have all the money you need to meet your cash flow requirements, delay production.

11 Producing the programme

Now comes the easy part. It has taken months, if not years, to get to this point. Producing will take you only a few weeks.

1 Research

The more you spend on research and careful planning in pre-production, the less it will cost you in the expensive production and post-production stages. You will need to research every aspect of the production, especially every aspect connected with historical or scientific facts. Make a point of instructing all your researchers to carefully note every source of information. If you are making a historical drama or documentary, or anything that involves any type of scientific facts, you will need to have your facts right.

If you sell the programme to a foreign distributor, they will almost certainly ask you for an annotated script. This is the script with a footnote for every fact that is quoted or referred to, listing the exact source of the information. Not only can you answer queries if a viewer challenges you, but you can also double-check if you are infringing copyright.

2 Development

This usually refers to the period during which the script is written. You have pulled together a partnership or consortium of people who have a financial stake in the project. They all share in the copyright and in the profits.

Some of them will have insisted that they have a right to comment on the script. Sometimes their comments will be valid and sometimes they won't be. Even if the comments are not valid, the person making the comments will think they are.

Either way, you are in for a rocky time with your scriptwriter, trying to get everything right. There is a certain amount of planning you can do here, for example, the director and line producer could start lining up certain things that you know you will need. Don't expect development to take a day, or even a week.

QUICK GUIDE:

Dramas and documentaries need scripts. Game shows and reality programmes need a different format that does not stipulate dialogue, but is strict on timings. Soap operas need a "bible", an extensive set of documents that detail the characters, settings, scenarios, plots, subplots and style of the soap.

3 Final script

Once you have a script that everyone is happy with, you can print it and duplicate it.

4 Pre-production

The line producer (production manager) and the director will take over from you now, and you can start working on other things, assuming that the production is completed. However, as the producer is ultimately responsible for everything, you will be called on to take decisions daily. Preferably, you should at this stage start working on your next project, to ensure that you are making money after the project and into the future.

Pre-production involves the script breakdown, the production schedule, the shooting script and the final call sheets. It also involves the casting, the crew, the location and studio bookings – in fact everything that you weren't forced to commit to earlier. Remember, there are relatively few people involved in pre-production and they cost comparatively less money.

The more time and money you spend on careful planning, the less you will spend on production.

5 Production

This is referred to as “principal photography” when you are making a film or a drama series. It refers to the time when all the photographic material is recorded, either on film or on video. This stage involves the employment of the most people on the production, the most expensive equipment and involves a lot of logistics. The more competent your line producer (production manager), the better it goes.

6 Post-production

Post-production starts when all the shooting is finished. If the production is complicated, you will have employed a post-production supervisor as well.

This person assists the line producer and is responsible for making sure that post-production runs smoothly. Editing is also expensive. It involves specialised people and complex equipment. The better the production was planned and shot, the quicker it will go. Remember, time is money.

QUICK GUIDE:

There is an expression, “We'll fix it in post (- production).” A word of warning: it's cheaper to fix it in production. You may not be able to “fix it in post”. You can only post-produce material that you have shot.

7 Production accounting

All this time, the production accountant is recording every cent that is spent. Make sure that you get a weekly schedule of what is spent, what the budget is so far, and how it affects the budget for the week and the budget to date. If you are getting reports weekly, there is no excuse for running over budget.

All the partners should have access to financial reports. If something happens and the project is going to go over budget, then it may be possible to rearrange the business plan. However, this will affect the deal, and will involve consultation with all the partners. You are well advised to issue weekly progress reports and circulate them to all the partners concerned.

8 Approval

Once the television programme is edited, it has to be approved by all concerned. This probably involves all the partners and especially the SABC and a foreign distributor.

Approval will probably affect all the other elements of the project, such as competitions, merchandising, radio and press material.

9 Broadcast master

There may even be further changes to be made to the final cut. Once the final master is approved, make security masters. Then deliver it to the broadcaster and the foreign distributor in the format they require.

10 Back up and security

Don't ever leave out this step. The final broadcast master is what can be copyrighted, and it is what will make you money in the future.

Make sure that security copies are taken from the master, and that the master is archived at an archiving service. Here it will be kept at a constant temperature and humidity, and will be shielded from magnetic fields. Make sure you have security copies.

12 Delivering the programme

There are a number of processes and procedures involved in delivery. The commissioning editor will help you in this regard, but you will also have these details in your contract, and in the SABC’s Policy and Procedures for the Procurement of Local Television Programmes. These procedures ensure that the right programme, as approved by the Content Hub, and as required by the audiences, goes on air at the right time.

Remember:

1. There are often many versions of a master that lead up the final master that is approved. These procedures make sure that the correct tape is delivered.
2. The SABC is strict on quality. It wants to ensure that the audience will see and hear the best picture and sound quality that the technology can deliver.

Here is a checklist of what you need to do in order to deliver the right tape of the correct quality and format.

	Description	Yes	No
1	Final master approved for technical quality		
2	Duration checked		
3	All legal requirements checked		
4	Aspect ratio approved		
5	All copyright assignments and wavers completed		
6	Research, sources and annotations checked		
7	Music cue sheets completed		
8	Performance and appearance releases checked		
9	Protection master checked		
10	FCC form completed		

A note on intellectual property:

1. You cannot just point a camera at pictures in a book and include this footage in your programme. Pictures are always owned by someone. If the copyright has expired, the pictures may still be owned by virtue of reproduction rights. All these copyright details have to be checked and cleared.
2. People have a right to privacy. If they are walking down the street in a public place, it is assumed that they are willingly appearing in public, but they also have a right to their own dignity. It is best to secure a release form for anyone appearing in a programme, unless they are part of the background, and provided they do not appear in an undignified light. A written release is essential even if the participants tell you that they are willing to participate.
3. In factual programmes, you have to provide sources for all the statements made. It is best to submit an annotated script. This is a script that carries the sources for all factual statements made, the sources of all opinions, and the releases for all people who have expressed those opinions or interpretations.
4. All music is owned by someone. If it is recorded from “copyright free” discs, the source still has to be entered on the “Music Cue Sheet”. If you have asked a composer to write music especially for the programme, then that composer owns the rights to that music until they have signed an agreement with you commissioning the music.

The Content Hub commissioning editor will supply you with all the information you need to make sure you get it right.

13 Marketing the programme

Most of the elements that go with the television programme (setting, characters, artists, director, interactivity, spin-offs, merchandising, target audience, distribution) are involved in the marketing. If they earn money for the production as well, all the better.

This step will possibly already be done by the time the business plan is written.

The overall marketing costs have to be included in the business plan. However, they may only have been estimated and included in the business plan as a provision.

1 Set your marketing objectives

What are you trying to sell? Primarily, the broadcaster is trying to sell people to the advertisers. So you have to attract people to watch the programme, and to do that you have to market the programme to them.

How many people do you want? This is the type of marketing objective you will set. You will want a certain number of viewers (that number has to grow from week to week). You may want to sell units of merchandising. You may want to attract newspaper readers and radio listeners. You may want to attract competition entrants. All these are your marketing objectives.

2 Set your marketing strategy

You have set your objectives. Your strategy is how you are going to achieve them.

Look at the competition. Look at what is being broadcast at the same time on other channels and in other media. Draw up your plan. List all things you would like to do to achieve these objectives.

Make sure that your activities are directed specifically to achieving the numbers specified in the objectives. Entertainment is notorious for using publicity stunts to attract attention. Be careful with them, but they are great when they work as planned.

3 Cost the strategy

How much will each activity cost? This is like doing the production budget, except that it involves media buying, publicity, public relations and lots of publicity stunts.

4 Develop a marketing budget

Now start on the marketing budget. This involves taking the costings you did in the last step and applying them week by week so that you can see the costs as part of a marketing cash flow analysis.

5 Can you afford it?

The answer will invariably be “No”. Be careful. It is always tempting to trim the marketing budget to boost profits, but this is false economy. We saw earlier that programmes have to fight for “attention” as the viewers have so many choices. With television, you are entering a battlefield with many opponents and the only weapon you have is marketing.

If you have to trim the budget, then trim those parts of the strategy that don't really achieve objectives. If you cut out the “nice to haves” and leave the “must haves” you will probably be able to afford it.

6 Check the deal

Check back to the deal. Look at the responsibilities of the other partners, and see if there are other marketing opportunities. Share the draft marketing plan with all the partners. They may have excellent ideas you never thought of. In a commissioned television production, the broadcaster usually does all the marketing without reference to the producer. If the producer has something valuable to contribute, the commissioning editor will listen attentively. It's different in a co-production. You are all in it together.

7 Design the marketing schedule

Now take all the activities that make up the strategy and assign deadlines to them. Decide on a start date and a completion date. If you include all the activities that are involved in every strategy, you are probably looking at hundreds of deadlines. In the same way as your line producer (production manager) will have used specialised scheduling software on the production schedule, you should use project management software to handle this for you.

8 Write the marketing plan

Now you can write the marketing plan. It will look a little like the business plan with obvious variations. What is important is that the marketing budget has to be completed before the business plan, as the costs (and possible income streams) have to be part of the business plan.

9 Assign responsibilities

If you use a standard project management software package, it will automatically generate reports that tell every person responsible for marketing what they have to do, when to start, when to finish and what they may spend.

10 Manage the marketing

Nothing ever goes as planned, and the better you have planned, the less there is to go wrong. However, there is never any harm in spending time, or a brainstorm session, with your team, to work out what possibly could go wrong. Then you can plan for such events and have a “Plan B” to work to.

What have you learned?

This book has succeeded if you now realise just how little you really know. Producing a television programme is a huge, complex task, even for the most experienced producer. Most TV producers start off as contractors in commissioning agreements with the SABC. Many end up as partners and co-producers.

There's no reason you can't be one of them! Good luck!

This book is an overview. Now read other Content Hub guides and publications, especially Art of Co-Production and Art of Sourcing Content. If you want to go further, go to the recommended reading and the list of resources that follows.

Recommended reading

Eastman ST (2012) *Media Programming*. Belmont: Wadsworth.

Eastman ST (2006) *Promotion for Marketing for Broadcasting, Cable and the Web*. Massachusetts: Focal.

Litwak M (2002) *Dealmaking in the Film and Television Industry*. California: Silman-Jones.

Pine J & Gilmore J (1999) *The Experience Economy*. USA: Harvard.

Resnik G & Trost S (1996) *All You Need to Know about the Movie and TV Business*. USA: Fireside.

Vogel H (2010) *Entertainment Industry Economics*. London: Cambridge.

Zillman D (ed.) (2000) *Media Entertainment*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Glossary of terms

Adding value

The process in business where value is added during the development and manufacturing processes. The overall process is called the Value Chain.

Annotated script

A script required by a distributor that includes the reference for every fact quoted, every source of information, and the ownership of all other property used.

Brainstorming

A group activity for generating new ideas, by encouraging people to come up with ideas and discouraging criticism.

Budget

A detailed description of all expenditure that will be incurred.

Business plan

A complete description of a business project.

Channel branding

A description of the personality and “soul” of a television channel that indicates the type of programming it offers to a certain audience.

Channel share

The percentage of the number of viewers a channel has attracted at a certain time, relative to the other channels available to that audience.

Commercial breaks

The places at which advertisements are inserted between and within television programmes.

Commissioning

The process by which a broadcaster invites production houses to make programmes to the specifications set by the broadcaster.

Concept

An overall idea of a project.

Co-productions

A deal between two or more people to produce a television programme.

Copyright

The right to intellectual property, governed by South African law and subject to international agreements.

Cost of sales

The money spent to incur sales. It consists of overheads, commissions and discounts.

Culture

The way groups of people say and do things.

Deal

The conclusion of a business project.

Demographics

The quantitative analysis of an audience.

Digital Terrestrial Transmission

Transmitting television signals through the air so that as many as 10 digital channels take up the same spectrum as one analogue channel.

Foreign distributor

A distributor who sells programming to broadcasters globally.

Free-to-air television

Commercial or public television that does not charge a subscription.

Hierarchy of needs

The triangular arrangement of human needs proposed by Abraham Maslow.

Logline

Based on the High Concept Line, it describes emotionally a project.

LSM

A measurement of the living standard primarily described by the types of things a group of consumers purchase.

Merchandising

Using a theme, character, brand or any other aspect of a programme to sell consumer goods.

Pay-TV

Broadcast television that is encoded, but decoded to subscribers only.

Rate Card Cost

The cost of television advertising as published by the broadcaster.

Repurposing

Taking a television programme and changing it to make it suitable for a new use or market.

South African Audience Research Foundation

A non-profit company owned by broadcasters, media owners and advertising agencies to conduct media research.

Set top box

The decoder needed to convert digital broadcast signals into a signal that the TV set can use.

Treatment

A description of a television project before the script is written.

Versioning

Taking a television programme and making different versions for different audiences.

Research resources

South African Audience Research Foundation (a resource for AMPS research)	www.saarf.co.za
Statistics South Africa (all SA statistics)	www.statssa.gov.za
TELMAR (an agency for AMPS data).	www.telmar.co.za
IMS-SA (an agency for AMPS data)	(011) 447-7843
Eighty-20 Media Research.	www.eighty20.co.za
Nielsen Research.	en-za.nielsen.com

Free stuff from the web

Artslink newsletter	www.artslink.co.za
ITWeb newsletter	www.itweb.co.za
Screen Africa newsletter	www.screenafrica.com
Population census	www.statssa.gov.za
SA Media Facts	www.omdmedia.co.za
AMPS Presentations	www.saarf.co.za
TV SA	www.tvsa.co.za
The Media Online	themediainline.co.za

Web resources

Producing management software	www.film-makerssoftware.com
FESPACO	www.fespaco.bf
SABC	www.sabc.co.za
Filmmaker	www.filmmaker.co.za
National Film and Video Foundation	www.nfvf.co.za

The Art of Pitching

A Handbook for Independent Producers

The really exciting thing about television is that it is always changing. The entire media industry moves with rapidly improving technology, changing fashions and tastes, and most of all, the development of digital media.

When this book first appeared eight years ago, digital media was just a passing add-on.

Not any more.

Nearly everyone in South Africa has a cell phone, and most of them have Internet access. They can get onto their favourite social network sites at the touch of a button.

They can respond to SMS interactivity, Google information, and play music when and where they want to. Many can stream video.

None of this was envisaged six years ago.

This revised second edition includes the latest development in digital television, and also keeps things open, to provide for all the exciting surprises that the next month offers.

As Albert Einstein said, "Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning."

Howard Thomas has worked in the entertainment industry in South Africa for nearly 40 years. He is an award-winning TV producer, and has worked in radio, theatre, film, magazine and interactive media. He has been writing about the industry for over ten years and training in the industry for over 20 years. He is a SAQA-qualified training designer, assessor and quality assurance manager. He authored The Art of Pitching, The Art of Co-production and The Art of Sourcing Content for the SABC. He specialises in broadcast management, scheduling and audience targeting, and has made extensive studies of audience psychology within African cultures. He lectures, trains and coaches all over Africa.